

## **XII. Brushsaw safety**

Brushsaws are very effective tools for restoration of Wisconsin plant communities. They are effective at cutting invasive plants like sweet clover or wild parsnip even on steep slopes, removing small brush, and creating firebreaks through grassy or brushy areas. They can be a safety risk due to the fast spinning blade which does the work. We recommend wearing proper personal protective equipment (PPE) when using a brushsaw. This includes safety glasses, hearing protection, long pants, and gloves. Non-users should remain a safe distance away from the blade during operation as rocks, sticks, or broken blades can be thrown away from where the cutter is placed.

Brushsaws come with several types of blades. The main types we suggest using are the three point blade for cutting grass, sweet clover, parsnip, and other weeds; and the saw blade for cutting brush and small trees (up to 1.5 inches in diameter). When using the saw blade, be aware of the kickback areas of the blade. Cut trees with the left side of the blade. Sharpen the blades with the correct files after each day of use to keep a sharp cutting edge. Be aware that blades will sometimes crack due to dull usage, cutting wires, dirt, or rocks. Cracked blades need to be replaced with new blades so that pieces don't fracture off the blade.

To keep the brushsaw running smoothly, periodically clean the air filter, grease the head, and burn off built up carbon on the spark arrestor. Consult the appropriate tool manual (online) for more information on safe usage and maintenance of brushsaws.